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United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

**Letter dated 9 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that the International Seminar on Environment, Religion and Culture was held at Tehran from 18 to 20 June 2001. I wish also to enclose, herewith, the Tehran Declaration which was adopted by the Seminar (see annex).

I would highly appreciate it if the Tehran Declaration could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 25.

(Signed) Hadi Nejad-Hosseini
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 9 October 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Tehran Declaration on Environment, Religion and Culture

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, proclaiming the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, as well as the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly,

Recalling also the Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations Millennium Assembly, held in New York in September 2000, as well as the Declaration adopted at the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual leaders held in conjunction with the Millennium Summit,

Recalling also the Assisi Declarations as well as the conservation conference on "Sacred Gifts for a Living Planet" held at Kathmandu in November 2000,

Recalling also the Jeddah Declaration on Islam and Environment, adopted in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in October 2000,

Recalling also the Harvard series of seminars on world religions and ecology,

Reaffirming that inter-religious dialogue, based on mutual respect and understanding, is essential for promoting international peace and security, including its environmental and social dimensions,

Reaffirming also that lasting international peace and security calls for an attitude of reverence for all kinds of life on Earth and respect for the environment for the benefit of present and future generations,

Recalling that all religions around the world have basic common values revolving around respect for life and the need to live in harmony with nature,

Recalling also that throughout human civilization, religious precepts have had a positive influence on the natural environment, although practice often has lagged behind precepts,

Emphasizing that humanity stands at a critical juncture in history, one that requires reconciling religious precepts and practices for the protection of life on Earth,

Emphasizing also, as documented by the United Nations Environment Programme, that ecological crises facing humanity are deeply rooted in a complex web of political, economic, social, technological as well as inadequate societal attitudes, belief systems and perceptions,

Stressing that over-consumption and mismanagement of natural resources as well as widespread poverty and the debt burden are among the main causes of environmental degradation, which has reached unprecedented levels,

Aware also of the unique potential of the religions to inform, inspire and instruct people throughout the world as well as of the need to retrieve, re-evaluate and reconstruct core human and ecological values embedded in the different traditions,

Recalling the call by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Religious Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for promoting the protection of the environment as a religious duty through a holy combat for the protection of the environment based on our respective religious precepts,

Recalling also the proposal of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, aimed at enhancing the inter-religious dialogue on environment,

Mindful that inter-religious dialogue on environment of an interdisciplinary nature should include scientists and representatives of civil society,

Conscious of our moral and religious obligation to provide to future generations a planet as healthy as the one that we inherited,

We, the participants in the International Seminar on Environment, Religion and Culture, held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 18 to 20 June 2001:

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, including the inter-religious dialogue on environment;
2. *Reaffirm* the Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations Millennium Summit, held in New York in September 2000, which provides that "the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants";
3. *Express our deep conviction* that religious, moral and ethical values can play a major role in addressing the global as well as the local environmental challenges facing humanity;
4. *Commit ourselves* to educate our respective communities and followers on the environmental content of our religion with a view to promoting environmentally responsible behaviour;
5. *Commit ourselves*, in addition to educating, to promote practices that are in accordance with our religious and cultural beliefs and based on respect for life and the need to live in harmony with nature and, in this regard, call on the need to promote liability for environmental damage;
6. Based on our conviction that the inter-religious dialogue on issues related to environment are mutually beneficial for humanity, we call on the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with interested partners, to establish an inter-religious and multidisciplinary Forum on Environment to be convened on a regular basis;
7. In view of the fact that the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002 is a landmark event on sustainable development, invite the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with interested partners, to convene a World Religious Summit on Environment as a contribution to that historical event;
8. *Request* the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to transmit the present Declaration as well as the proceedings of this seminar to the high-level segment of

the United Nations General Assembly on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations to be held in New York in December 2001;

9. *Express our deep gratitude* to the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, and to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and, in particular, the Department of the Environment, for convening this Seminar and for the measures taken to ensure its success.
